Message

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Sent: 5/24/2018 12:28:40 PM
To: Beth Fine [Ex. 6 - Personal Privacy]
Subject: Fwd: BNA: States Seek to Leverage Federal Science in Battling Teflon Toxics

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Flaharty, Stephanie" <Flaharty.Stephanie@epa.gov>
Date: May 24, 2018 at 7:21:03 AM EDT
To: "Grevatt, Peter" <Grevatt.Peter@epa.gov>, "Mclain, Jennifer" <Mclain.Jennifer@epa.gov>, "Burneson, Eric" <Burneson.Eric@epa.gov>, "Rodgers-Jenkins, Crystal" <Rodgers-Jenkins.Crystal@epa.gov>, "Albert, Ryan" <Albert.Ryan@epa.gov>, "Holsinger, Hannah" <Holsinger.Hannah@epa.gov>, "Tiago, Joseph" <Tiago.Joseph@epa.gov>, "Wadlington, Christina" <Wadlington.Christina@epa.gov>
Subject: BNA: States Seek to Leverage Federal Science in Battling Teflon Toxics

States Seek to Leverage Federal Science in Battling Teflon Toxics

Posted May 23, 2018, 5:47 PM
By Amena H. Saiyid

- States moving on their own to address toxic contamination
- At the same time, they look to EPA for research, methods

Cleaning up water and soil contaminated with widely used fluorinated chemicals is a top concern of state regulators, who despite addressing the problem on their own say they still need more direction and information from the federal government.

"We all recognize these are important issues and that we have to figure out a better way to address them," Shawn Garvin, secretary for Delaware's Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, told Bloomberg Environment.

"There needs to be some floor from which we all can work," Garvin added as other state officials raised questions about water, soil, and even crop contamination.

Garvin joined other state officials and industry representatives at an Environmental Protection Agency summit May 22 and May 23 in Washington where EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt announced a long-term plan to address the ubiquitous class of several thousand chemicals.

They are used to create heat-, grease- and water-resistant products such as cookware, food wrappers, and firefighting foams. At sufficient exposure levels the compounds have been linked to a range of health effects from low birth weights to elevated cholesterol.

Pruitt said the agency would designate as hazardous two fluorochemicals—perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS)—develop maximum contaminant levels in drinking water for the chemicals, and follow up with recommendations on groundwater standards before the year's end.

Though state officials welcomed the federal announcement, they say for the most part they are forging ahead on their own without federal leadership to respond to contamination concerns.

Forging Ahead

Pruitt's hazardous substance designation means states and localities could hold a responsible party liable for the contamination at various contaminated sites, meaning they can recover some of the cleanup costs, Kirk Koudelka, assistant commissioner for Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's land policy and strategic initiatives, said.

Minnesota reached a $850 million settlement with former producer 3M Co. in February over a Scotchgard ingredient that contaminated drinking water supplies, he said.

The settlement helped the state with cleanup costs at former 3M sites, but other states don't have access to that pool of money.

New Jersey has had to dip into its own funds to conduct research into the risks posed by three of these chemicals. The state is poised to set state drinking water standards at 14 parts per trillion for PFOA and PFOS, Catherine McCabe, acting commissioner of New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, said at the summit.

That's compared to the EPA's unenforceable advisory level of 70 parts per trillion it uses as guidance for any combination of the two chemicals.

States are generally ahead of federal agencies in addressing contamination from these chemicals, "and frankly EPA is catching up," Brad Hutton, deputy director for New York State Department of Health, told Bloomberg Environment.

New York isn't waiting for the U.S. EPA on PFOA and PFOS, but like New Jersey also is setting its own drinking water standards for the two chemicals, he said.

Test Methods, Science Needed

Meanwhile, Michigan has found 31 sites—including five Department of Defense sites—contaminated with these fluorochemicals, Heidi Grether, director of state's Department of Environmental Quality, said at the summit.

To gauge the extent of contamination, the state will test its public water sources which supply water to 75 percent of its residents. But, Grether said, the state needs direction from the EPA about the technical methods to use to test for the two targeted chemicals and what else should be evaluated.

For example, Grether asked if the state should also be testing its crops because the farmers have been using biosolids to fertilize their lands.

"How do we focus our activities when there is so much to ask for? How do we find that collective path?" she asked.

Seeking More Support

The federal government has the scientists, funding, and laboratories that states lack to be able to research the dangers posed by these chemicals, state officials said.

"We prefer that EPA do the heavy lifting," Scott Mandirola, director of West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection, told Bloomberg Environment.

For instance, they are looking to the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry to release draft toxicological profiles for four fluorochemicals, including PFOA and PFOS, found at Superfund sites.

Patrick Breysse, who heads the agency, said the study would be released after the agency finalized its risk communication plan, but stopped short of providing a timeline.

The report is important because state public health officials can use these levels to set cleanup standards, Minnesota's Koudelka said.

The federal government is aware that preventing fluorochemical contamination is a challenging issue that will require collaboration among all levels of government and the scientific community, David Ross, EPA assistant administrator for water, told the summit's participants.

"There are no easy answers that have come out of this discussion, but we are committed to solving this problem," Ross said.